

upis ant, PM. TM, SS

3/22/70

The Admiral Burkley file

In response to a request of the Archivist for this file, I was sent:

- CE 1126, which is not marked as part of his file, 9pp.
- CD3, Berger Statement, 11/30, 2pp.
- CD3m Stout statement, 11/29, 1 p.
- CD3, Kellerman statement, ~~Kellerman statement~~ 11/29, 4 pp
- CD3, Kellerman statement, 11/30/ 2pp
- CD3, Hill statement, 4 pp, 11/30
- CD3, Landis statement, 11/30, 7 pp
- CD3, Attachment 2, proposed AFL manifest, Ft Worth-Dallas
- CD3, Lawson statement, 12/1, 5 pp.
- CD5:8-10
- CD5:150-1

None of these is new to me. The most casual examination shows this is hardly an appropriate or complete file for an Admiral Burkley file or for the file of the President's Physician. Among the obvious missing things, from the amateurish concept of these files, is the Sibert-O'Neill report, as well as other things I have recently obtained. This makes one wonder why, at the very early date of the organization of this file, it was made into a nothingness. One also wonders why he prepared no statement until 11/27/63, five days after the tragedy. His medical and his military experience both should have told him there was immediate need for recording his observations and knowledge, as well as what he was told, what he heard and overheard, especially the account of the autopsy that would be appropriate for the man in his function.

However, because of what I've learned since first seeing this material, all in the numbered files, in 1966, I decided to go over it again. Also, in the light of what has been learned in more than three years, because it seems so very strange that the professional investigators, the Secret Service, neither on their own nor under instructions (from this record), prepared any kind of written statement until at least a week had passed.

This need not suggest a mammoth conspiracy, but it is proof of a permeating unprofessionalism among professionals and an inconceivable sloppiness, for I do assume there were no earlier statements that have been disposed of (although I'd be surprised if no single SS agent hadn't made fairly comprehensive notes). What is surprising is that there seems to have been no SS order to each agent to make such note the first moment his duties permitted, or that each wasn't called in and questioned, and taped, again as soon as possible.

It takes Burkley two wide-margined, double-spaced pages to say he was aware something happened at Dealey Plaza, but he didn't know what, and that he got to the hospital, stopping first at the Trade Mart, about 3-5 minutes after the President (which seems unlikely, given what he says he did at the TM). Mrs. Kennedy was seated outside the emergency room when he got there. What he next says-and doesn't say, is quite interesting:

"I immediately entered the room, went to the head of the table and viewed the President. It was evident that death was imminent and that he was in a hopeless condition".

Aside from a meager account of the medical procedures, which tend to date his arrival, "he was being given extra cardiac massage" (probably dictated and not read, meaning "external" cardiac massage, the President's physician

"Mrs. Kennedy...expressed her desire to remain with the ~~body~~ President's body continuously until he was returned to the White House".

So, Derring-Do George "stepped to someone (sic) and asked for the Superintendent of the hospital. With a Secret Service Agent ordered him to get with dispatch a conveyance and a casket to carry the body back to Washington."

This does not mean he planned taking the corpse down The Lonesome Trail with a mule team.)Page 4)

He asked Clark to get "the necessary papers and to expedite departure of the body from that area", hardly the requests to be addressed to a mere neurosurgeon after the crime of the century. Here Rose (never identified by name) "came in" and Burkley "explained to him the necessity of quick action". If he explained it to the medical examiner, he did not to history, for the necessity was not indicated. Rose said homicides have to go through those procedures prescribed by law, but the law does not relate to the President's physician: "I informed him again that it was essential that we have him moved immediately as Mrs. Kennedy was going to stay where she was until such movement was effected." (Did ever a man so loudly demand he be considered a conspirator?) There is no break in the quote here: "With some difficulty, one of the local judges appeared (and all the time I thought he had no difficulty getting there, having that Brown Buick of which Manchester wrote so elaborately), or maybe he was arthritic? Had a broken leg?) and I asked him to make the necessary arrangements". Again no break in quibbling, the confusion being uniquely Burkley's: "After having called the local sheriff on the phone, some confusion resulted in this delay." Confusion is no exaggeration. Why called Decker? How did that, not either the law or the Burkley & Co. desire to ignore the law, cause "this delay"-and what delay is this delay?

By now it should be wondered how the President survived a sneeze!

Burkley "supervised the transfer and the room was vacated". We can assume what he does not say, the transfer from stretcher to casket. With the room already vacated, as Burkley put it, and already "Mrs. Kennedy proceeded to follow the casket", Doughty George her constant companion, for, his accounting, but, "At this point I again examined the ~~room~~ room and they had cleaned the room. The roses...were in the wastebasket...two roses...lying on the floor". Never let it be said that the President's physician never ~~understood~~ understood where his true obligations lay, where his duties took him, what he had to "examine the room" for not less than the second time. Not for such trivialities as evidence, murder being below consideration; not to wonder why the President's protectors hadn't searched it for evidence before it was cleaned. His second search of the room puts us and history permanently in his debt, for he had the rare foresight to pick those two errant roses up and "put them in my pocket" (5). Selfless, Doctor George. He gave them to Jackie. So why should anyone wonder about that nasty ol' Bullet 399 and where it came from, or whether there were fragments of lead on the stretcher covering. Dutiful George had remember Hippocrates as no doctor before him, had picked up those two roses (careful not to get common, plebian roses from the wastebasket, for Mrs. Kennedy, eschewing the tawdry, the unessential, the medically and legally insignificant. Two roses, from the floor, there we have the need for a second examination" of that room!

He, Clint Hill and possibly others he doesn't recall were in the back of the ambulance with her to the airport. They "rode in silence for a while" but what they said when they broke their silence is not related.

"During the course of the flight, determination of the immediate action on arrival in Washington was made to assure complete compliance with

Mrs. Kennedy's wishes" (page 6). Here we get the real nitty gritty, those legally important details (no hiatus): "I spoke to her while kneeling on the floor so I would be at the level of her face rather than leaning forward (sic) ... stating that it was necessary that the President be taken to a hospital prior to going to the White House. She questioned why and I stated it must be determined, if possible, the type of bullet used and compare this with future material found." No wonder Burkley was White House physician. He could see into the future and, having seen more than one wound, he knew only one "type of bullet" had been used! He said, "...it should be a military hospital for security measures". Nobody by George Burkley could have been this wise, to know, instinctively, that with the President already murdered there could be the proper "security measures". Or did he expect the hospital to be raided and the body stolen? Or that there were neither soldiers nor sailors nor police anywhere in Washington to make any other hospital "secure" while they were flying a thousand miles to it? His next statement is not in accord with the quotation from him in Bishop, but when we have to choose between Bishop and Burkley, we have two horns and a dilemma: "The question was answered by her stating she wanted the President taken to Bethesda Naval Hospital". Bishop says this was Burkley's idea because the President had been Navy and, I think because Burkley also was. But, again with no hiatus and no continuing, "Arrangements were made on the ground for departure to Walter Reed Army Hospital or Bethesda Naval Hospital, as the case may be". Presumably, this was spontaneous, independent of any communication from the plane.

Burkley "assured Mrs. Kennedy at this point (i.e., when she decided that she would accompany the body to Bethesda Naval Hospital") that I would remain with the President until he was returned to the White House". How unusual and overly-dedicated of the President's own, personal, official physician (who thereafter didn't do it, leaving the body while it was at the hospital). He says he was the last to leave the platform when the casket left the plane, sort of in keeping with the Navy tradition about the captain. She, Bobby and Bill were in the back of the ambulance with the body. Burkley, the driver, Paul Landis, "rode in the driver's compartment". At the hospital she was taken to the 17th floor. Despite his assurance he would stay with the President, he didn't; "The body was taken to the mortuary where I met it and observed its transfer to the table. The examination was performed by Commander Humes and members of his staff." One stop? No X-rays? Finck is on Humes' staff? Or, who besides Boswell of Humes' staff helped with the "examination"? (No hiatus) "Also present were Admiral Kenny, Admiral Galloway, and Captain Canada. General McHugh had remained in the vicinity of the President constantly throughout this time".

Burkley knows his Blue Book, if nothing else, and he is Navy enough to skip a couple more generals. He accounts for no others present. But why should he be expected to account for those others present and potential witnesses, or for the taking of X-rays or pictures, the reading of X-rays and their interpretation, the arrival of Finck, who ordered added X-rays (since conveniently vaporized and officially non-existent) or, indeed, any of the nasty, unpleasant details of the so-called autopsy? Is it not enough that he says, "I made numerous trips to the 17th floor for reassurance to those in that area (perhaps that it was all a bad dream, or that some modern medical miracle would make the murdered President whole and restore him to vibrant life?) and to supply them with some idea of the contemplated departure time". For this "numerous trips" were required? How many times need he tell them the time? Or, did things come up that necessitated delaying that time? If so, what things? Of course, the phone other used he wouldn't dream of using. For all of this, "Mrs. Kennedy spoke to me in the bedroom of the suite, expressing her appreciation which was greatly valued by me and which I will ~~always~~ remember." Which is more than ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ he can say of his medical and military functions, neither having in any way been discharged. Or is this the quintessence of the requirements of the President's military physician?

Now he tells how the President was clothed, his hair "combed in the usual fashion and his appearance in the casket gave no evidence of the injury he had received." Just like Burkley, "no evidence of the injury he had received". "From this official account of the President's official physician, no one would ever know that a major part of the President's head had been blown away. He might, indeed, of died of complications from an ingrown toenail, or perhaps a tainted oyster (if not in San Francisco).

Not that he says nothing at all about what happened "during the examination":

"...we received a call from the 17th floor in regard to Mrs. Kennedy's wedding rings...This ring [^] personally removed and carried to her on the 17th floor and gave it to her in person."

Here we have all the reason in the world to have medical men who rise to be admirals, all the urgent necessity for an Admiral to be the President's physician!

The body was placed in a "solid mahogany wooden casket" "there is no reference to the great time and effort by the morticians nor is there any indication of what Manchester reports, of the unnatural appearance of the ~~XXXXXX~~ President after reconstruction, the things that appear to be of significance to Murkley medicine) and they went back to the White House, Mrs. JFK, Bobby and Bill again in back.

One urgent detail remains: "Mrs. Kennedy wanted his Sr. Christopher's medal presumably from his wallet, to be included in the casket. "We had a request" for this the next day, presumably the same day. In explanation he says,

"The wallet and the rest of the clothes had been taken into custody of the Secret Service": Knowing (Sibert-O'Neill report) that the President arrived naked at Bethesda, I do not recall any accounting of the history or handling of his clothing, of any search for evidence, of any precautions against the destruction or alteration of evidence, which is a measure of care and concern not inferior to that of the Warren Commission.

In some ways this is the most remarkable single document in the vast literary quicksand of the Commission and its work: a statement of the President's physician that says absolutely nothing about the number or nature of his wounds, of the personal observations he made, of the autopsy - of any single thing intended to be of significance. And to the Secret Service, the FBI, the President's Commission, this is only right and proper! And, emphasizing, he was never a witness, never consulted, not once asked for the knowledge he had.

Andrew E. Berger's 11/30/63 statement 2pp
reached

He was on 4 p.m.-12m shift, ~~xxxxxx~~ Dallas in AF #6970 11:40 a.m.,
met by Lawson, who sent to TM, where Advance Agent Grant assigned to post.

Heard of shooting from newsmen, Sought Stout, in charge, who was then
confirming, then saw Burkley and Chief Hendricks. Took them to Parkland in police
car. Took post outside emergency room, soon joined by Johnsen. Drain (#5067)
soon showed up, showed credentials, said Hoover had phoned and sent him. Drain
was accompanied by an "unidentified male" who "was a doctor friend of Drain's."
"Approximately 5 minutes subsequent to the visit of Agent Drain a (sic) unidenti-
fied CIA agent, after showing his credentials said he would be available".

He then tell sht stroy of the man they knocked down (but he doesn't say
they slugged him), giving time at about 1:30 p.m., when Nurse Nelson had no JFK-
connected business in emergency room. Tjis WM 45 yrs, 6'2", 185-190 lbs, gray
hair, "shouted that he was a FBI". They "forcibly restrained " him when he tried
to go past them without showing credentials, then turned him over to Kellerman.
Nelson and Cong. Teague witnesses.

Berger says he drove the ambulance to Love Field and identifies its
live occupants as Kellerman, Atout, Hill and Mrs. JFK. No mention Burkley. In
DC Berger escorted LBJ to White House in helicopter.

Statement of Stewart G. Stout, 11/29/63 1 p

He was ATSAIC, his detail including Sulliman, Johnsen, Berger, Olsson.

At about 12:35 SA Grant told him something had happened to the Pres. They met Burkley at White House phone. He asked when Pres had been taken. Switchboard operator (at White House? If so, Burkley's time is way off or the WH knew before Kellerman phoned). After Berger took Burkley, Stout, Grant, Sulliman, Johnsen, Olssen followed in police cars.

He places Sulliman, Olssen also in corridor security detail, presumably at different door(s). Stout went inside emergency room.

The only other thing he says is that he "rode in the front seat of the ambulance carrying his body to the airport, together with ATSAIC Kellerman and SA Berger".

What better reason is there for the total absence of any mention of either the President's injuries or the treatment or any of the comment he may have overheard?

Yet it is the Secret Service that was in charge of the President's security and at that moment the only body with any legal authority to make any inquiry, other than the Dallas police.

Is it conceivable that none of the SS agents made any reports on the extent and character of the injuries they, presumably, would be investigating? Or that Specter had no curiosity about this? Or any member of the Commission? Or any other member of the staff?

This is the norm?

Kellerman statements - 11/29/63, 4 pp.

Begins with locating occupants first three cars.

His recollection is faulty, understandably, and he has himself turning after the first shot and before "two additional shots rang out". One wonders, with this his 11/29 recollection, why he was later to describe a "flurry".

At the hospital he says Hill placed his coat "over the President's head and chest".

Kellerman "accompanied the President to the emergency room (he means into from what follows). His eyes were closed but I could see no visible damage to his face." He left immediately for other responsibilities. Note, however, that there is no reference to whatever damage he did see, and that was at the least the head and whatever prompted Hill to include the President's chest in what he hid (blood is enough, of course).

Tells of phoning White House, securing corridors, etc.

Told of death by Burkley, with suitable ellipsis given as 1 p.m. death.

Not only is there no account of the President's injuries, but he even leaves out the fight over the removal of the body. There is a clear suspicion someone dictated what should be included and what omitted. Naturally, including any account of the wounds could provide later complications.

Told by Rowley at DC airport that Sibert and O'Neill "had been assigned to this case and to allow them into the morgue". Gave Rowley 8 p.m. as estimated time of arrival of autos, which suggests search could have been begun much earlier than it was. Kellerman was pointed, "suggested he assign field agents to them to completely go over them for any evidence that might be found." Which, no doubt, accounts for why it wasn't done.

At Beth the body was taken "immediately" to the morgue, with him and Greer, who "remained in the morgue and viewed the autopsy examinations which were performed by Vice Admiral Galloway", plus Humes, Finck, Boswell, "together with the Naval Medical Staff.

The plural of examinations is correct. I am willing to believe it is a fair representation to say that Galloway participated in the "examinations", if no one else says so.

SA O'Leary was there part of the time.

He called Hill down "to view the body and to witness the damage of the gunshot wounds", before the embalming but, alas, after the examination, which required extensive dissection.

At an unspecified time "Prior to our departure I received all film, x-rays, that were used during this autopsy, and upon arrival at the White House I turned them over to SA W Bouck." There just may be a possible explanation for the missing extremities X-rays here, "that were used during this autopsy". Perhaps these had not been used there but had, let us say, been examined by the radiologist in his own office. If what Kellerman took is only what was with the body, what the prosecutors themselves examined and showed the agents, then the missing X-rays were not there for Kellerman to pick up and take with him.

Minor point: he does not account for how Burkley left the hospital

Kellerman, second statement, 11/30/63, 2 pp

Subject is three lines long, the security measures from Love Field to Bethesda, then to White House.

I also mentions the shift reorganizations, the LBJ security, the trip to the Navy hosp.

This says the four agents also remained through the mob lming.

This one also fails to mention Burkley'd departure. It is spseific in not placing him xm in the ambulance.

What is not clear is why it had to be written at all.

Clint Mill statement, 11/30/62, 6 pp.

His are understandable errors when he gets to talking about the shooting, i.e., calls Houston St. Elm, say he saw the President slump after the first shot, while he was panicking to his right rear, etc.

Quotes Mrs. J.F. as saying "They've shot his head off". If accurate, she saw it.

Saw part of right side of head on right rear missing, part of brain gone and bleeding profusely, part of skull, with hair, in seat.

Also says he cover head and upper chest with his coat, but why upper chest?

He also goes through the business of getting a casket and removing the body with no reference to any dispute, etc.

He and Landis secured 17th floor at Bethesda, screened every call, each person attempting to reach there.

Places time at which he was called to view body at about 2:45 a.m., and says "when I arrived the autopsy had been completed". McHugh, also never questioned, never a witness, also viewed wounds. However, this is about 3:45 later than the autopsy is said to have taken. Still places wound "six inches down from the neckline".

I doubt the morticians could have completed the reconstruction if they did not commence until after 2:45.

Statement of Paul Landis, 11/30/63, 7 pp

Landis is the chit-chat boy of the agents, one with a memory for detail. His statement begins with detailed recall of the irrelevant, like the color of the coat on the lady who gave Mrs. JFK the roses, the angles of the fence at the airport and the idirection in which they turned, etc.

On page 3 another triviality should be noted on the chance it holds future interest: Dave Powers took movies from inside the car. It might be interesting to know how close to Dealey Plaza he took them.

It took three full pages of nothingness to get the Dealey Plaza. However, he does say that ~~xxx~~ he did take in the TSBD and that he saw no one standing in any of the windows.

But because he has been giving all this unessential detail, I think that he gives on the timing and location of the first shot may be worthwhile. He says both cars had made the turn and were not yet straightened out when "I heard what sounded like the report of a high-powered rifle from behind me, over my right shoulder." Now first of all, the M-1 is NOT "high-powered". And second of all, at that point, over Landis's right shoulder is to the east of the TSBD. He again took in the TSBD and saw nothing.

Interestingly, and confirming his account is this recollection: that in checking to see if there had been a blowout IN FRONT of him, he could see the right front tire on the Pres's car. This confirms that the cars had not yet straightened out and that the follow-up had to have been further to the right than in a line with the Pres's. And the only reason he couldn't see the right rear is because the follow-up car was too close.

He calls the third shot the second he heard and describes it as like the sound of a high-powered bullet going into a five-gallon can when it impacted. He saw flying flesh and blood. He felt the shot came from the right front. He scanned the overpass and the area to the right. He saw a well-described Negro running up the knoll before he got under the overpass.

Hill gave the thumbs-down signal, which is ample indication of what he saw. For some reason Hill found this intelligence unworthy of mention in his own story.

Powers also saw the head wound. Someone told Hill to cover the wound(s).

But no account of the dispute over moving the body. Is it within reason that not one of the agents, spontaneously, considered this rather spectacular event worthy of note? Of these statements in the Burkley files, his establishes Landis as the man with the eye for detail and with recall, plus lucidity and a willingness to take time to record things. It seems highly improbable that he on his own omitted this very unpleasant bit. Thus the question of the integrity of the statements is raised, and when it is further considered that they were prepared beginning a week after the tragedy, further suspicion is cast upon the..

He left the 17th floor but once, to give Kellerman a message from Rowkey. And he also makes no mention of Burkley's departure from the hospital.

Nor does any one of the agents saw who handled the casket at Bethesda, another seemingly-strange omission the only effect of which could be to make it more difficult to find those who could give first-hand testimony, certainly making it less likely there would be interest in them for such a purpose.

Air Force One Manifest

The last of the 36 names is that of HMC Ellis H. Hendrix. He gave no deposition or affidavit. A Chief Hendrix is twice mentioned in the foregoing statements, with no expansion. I wonder if he can have been medical corps?

Statement of Winston G. Lawson, undated, 5 pp.

Takes him three pages to get tottner first shot, which he misdates as coming just as he was going under underpass. At this time he also saw Hickey standing up with his automatic weapon. Motorcycle policeman pulled up and said JFK had been shot.

As he rushed to emergency room he met attendants coming out with stretchers. The got outside when Connally was being removed, before he or JFK could have used a stretcher (re Manchester). He and Powers helped put JFK on stretcher, took him into emergency room.

He makes casual reference to the Medical Examiner's unwillingness to release the body, but hardly in the right context; indicating only that the agreement of the Sheriff was necessary.

to call who
BEFORE AF 1 departed, Drain told him ~~that~~ Shanklin, ~~xxx~~ said the suspect "who had been arrested for the investigation of the killing of a police officer that afternoon had worked at the" TSBD. Thus, at some time between 2:15 and 2:47 the word had passed through so many mouths and ears. Did Drain have the message before he went to the airport? The the FBI had it much, much earlier. None of the statements I recall account for his getting to the airport. He just appears there is Lawsons (and Lawson went to DC with the evidence with Drain early the next a.m.) In any event, this is but the briefest time at most after the DPD had Oswald at hq, where he was first identified as the man who had worked at the ~~TS~~ TSBD. He was not picked up until 1:45 and Fritz did not speak to his men until some time after he returned from the TSBD. If Drain had a walkie-talkie that would carry this distance or even if he just happened to pull in in a radio-equipped car, the time is very, very close. And if he had such a radio, why should Lawson have had to use the phone? Is it more than a close coincidence?

CD 5 pages in Burkley file, 16-10; 150-1

When I first saw CE392 in 1964 I knew something was wrong with the first page. It is also wrong that the original was not used. I now have the original but it is not at this early-morning moment convenient to make a comparison. However, the CE392 ss-printed version can be compared with the FBI's "verbatim" recopying (CD5:8).

The first page is missing in the "verbatim" FBI copy.

The opening of CD5:8 states that on November 25, C.J. Price advised the death certificate and statement of medical treatment had been taken with them by Burkley and SS agents and that the summary had been prepared by Kemp, Clark and "transmitted" by letter dated 11/23. The FBI left out the covering letter.

Burkley is not important enough to be a KP. This and the other marked papers in the file are stamped Other Ind & Org., etc.

In rereading the two Harper pages, which I have not examined with care since discovering them in the spring of 1966, I find several things of possible interest.

One is why it took two days, at least, assuming that with the late hour of the finding of the bone nothing was done 11/23 even though Harper took it to his uncle "immediately". The FBI report is of an 11/23 interview. I doubt the Harpers waited from 11/24 to 11/26 to tell the FBI, although it is possible.

Anderton gave the spot the Pres was shot on his own authority, so are we entitled to assume he by then knew? They did have and had studied Zap. However, this location differs from that the the younger Harper, who now seems to place it farther west, near the manhole of the sewer on the south side of ILM. With all the activity there within 10 minutes, I am not predisposed not to believe Anderton's locationing.

CD5:151 makes reference to what is missing here (and I've not seen it anywhere), the "FBI laboratory letter". Now the report doesn't say, but I believe it is a safe assumption that this letter was addressed to Burkley and should be in his files, as it should have been in this one. I will ask the Archives for it.

* * * *

If these are all the pages referring to or originating with Burkley, then there was remarkably little. But we know they are not, for conspicuously the receipt he got, in CD371, is not included. With its content, can that also be an accident? I have asked Rhoads if this is the complete file, knowing it is incomplete. He has not responded. I asked for the complete file.

Another thing difficult to believe is that there is here no indication either the FBI or the Secret Service asked Burkley the questions that, obviously, should have been asked of the President's physician and of a medical man not of the hospital staff who was present in the emergency room. Also, one would expect to find his account of what early shaped up as a hasty subject, the kidnapping of the cadaver. This was an open affront to Texas law, an open illegality, and the SS, at least, had to expect some possible consequences. But, neither report nor memo.

While it can be believed that there was simple mechanical error in omitting essential evidence from this file, it should not have happened and it should not be assumed. There is also this fact: these things appear in no other file I have seen.